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KNOWLEDGE AND FOREIGN POLICY OPINIONS: SOME MODELS FOR CONSIDERATION*

BY WILLIAM A. GAMSON AND
ANDRE MODIGLIANI

Will increased knowledge produce greater agreement on foreign policy issues? Not necessarily, the authors state. It depends in part on a person's pre-existing attitudes and what the prevalent, "mainstream" policy is. The analysis of "enlightenment," mainstream, and cognitive consistency models with reference to opinion formation and knowledge is imaginative and provocative.

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THERE IS a seldom cited but widely shared and appealing law of public opinion, which can be stated very simply: The more knowledgeable people are, the more likely they are to agree with me. This law would appear to be particularly applicable when one is concerned with public opinion on foreign policy, since these matters of state are far from most people's daily lives and highly complex. Unenlightened thinking will surely be more prevalent among those who have little information and understanding; those who are sophisticated and aware will tend to share the opinions of the prototype of these characteristics, oneself.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT MODEL

Many social scientists are strongly convinced of the inadequacy of military force or the threat of force as a means of influence in international relations. For such people, this "enlightenment" model leads to the expectation that, with increasing knowledge and sophistication, people are more likely to reject belligerent policies. An examination of public opinion data does not immediately disabuse one of this view. In one study, for example, the better-informed people were, the less

* An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Montreal meetings of the American Sociological Association, September 1964, under the title, "Competing Images of Soviet Behavior."

likely they were to support the statement, "We should never compromise with Russia but just continue to demand what we think is right."¹ In a 1953 poll, 70 per cent of the college-educated favored United Nations atomic energy control, while 61 per cent of the high school-educated and only 52 per cent of the grade school-educated favored such an alternative.² Or, in a 1954 poll, only 9 per cent of the college-educated, against 16 per cent of the grade school-educated, felt we should give up trying to reach agreements with Russia on outlawing atomic weapons.³

On the other hand, certain results which show that more knowledgeable people are more likely to support a militaristic policy tend to come as a surprise to those who believe in the enlightenment model. Back and Gergen report some examples of such greater willingness to engage in war on the part of the more knowledgeable.⁴ Of those who had opinions, 29 per cent who scored low on a measure of political knowledge, and only 9 per cent who scored high, favored decreasing the war effort in Korea. In a 1958 poll, 42 per cent of those who were poorly informed and only 18 per cent of those who were highly informed felt Berlin was not worth fighting over.⁵

THE MAINSTREAM MODEL

Such results give rise to a second explanation, more defensible than the enlightenment model. In this second explanation, education brings with it, not so much better understanding of the world as greater participation in it and attachment to the mainstream. The politically educated are not better analysts of complex situations but are simply more aware of what official U. S. policy is. Being more integrated into their society, and more susceptible to the influence of its institutions, their opinions are more likely to fall within the narrow boundaries of open official discussion. This occurs at the expense of either more conservative *or* more liberal alternatives that are not legitimized by the support of major political officials. The two models are summarized in Chart 1.

¹ Previously unreported data from Andre Modigliani, "The Public and the Cold War," Cambridge, Harvard University, 1962, unpublished undergraduate honors thesis.

² AIPO, May 24, 1953, reported in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 27, 1963, p. 167.

³ AIPO, Apr. 28, 1954, reported in *ibid.*, p. 168.

⁴ Kurt W. Back and Kenneth Gergen, "Public Opinion and International Relations," *Social Problems*, Vol. 11, Summer 1963, pp. 77-87, report on Gallup Survey 474, April 1951.

⁵ Previously unreported data from Modigliani, *op. cit.* The exact wording of the Berlin item was; "We should try talking to Russia (about Berlin) but avoid fighting no matter what since it's not worth it to get into a war over Berlin."

SUMMARY OF ENT

Independent variable: The degree of knowledge of the complex nature of foreign affairs and is reflected in the degree of knowledge of international affairs.
Dependent variable: Willingness to engage in war.

Central hypothesis: The greater the knowledge of international affairs, the less belligerence in one's foreign policy.

Independent variable: The degree of knowledge of international policy.

Intervening variable: One's exposure to influences such as education, which is highly related to education and knowledge of international affairs and knowledge of the official government policy.
Dependent variable: The degree of conformity of one's foreign policy to the official government policy.
Central hypothesis: The greater the knowledge of international affairs, the greater the degree of conformity of one's foreign policy to the official government policy.

Note that both of the above models are *consensus* theories, and will move all groups toward a better understanding (the enlightenment model) or more subject to social influence (the mainstream model) similarly affected by increasing knowledge, a single pole toward which their starting point.

The above issue is vitally important that appear to support the enlightenment model. In their analysis they reveal a correlation between knowledge and willingness to engage in war with increased knowledge. The sample of 558 residents of the Detroit Area included a sixteen-item measure of knowledge. The questions were straightforward and required considerable knowledge. Respondents from the following countries are included: Afghanistan, Mongolia, and Algeria, France, Japan, and tested their own atomic weapons.

⁶ We are indebted to John G. Hefner and Sheldon Levy, principals in the project, for making us to include several of our findings freely available to us.

KNOWLEDGE AND FOREIGN POLICY OPINIONS

189

CHART 1

SUMMARY OF ENLIGHTENMENT AND MAINSTREAM MODELS

Enlightenment Model

Independent variable: The degree of enlightened understanding of the true and complex nature of foreign affairs. Such enlightenment tends to be a product of education and is reflected in sophisticated knowledge of foreign affairs.

Dependent variable: Willingness to use military force to influence international affairs.

Central hypothesis: The greater the understanding and knowledge of foreign affairs, the less belligerence in one's foreign policy opinions.

Mainstream Model

Independent variable: The boundaries and clarity of official government foreign policy.

Intervening variable: One's attachment to the mainstream and the resultant exposure to influences such as the mass media. Such attachment and exposure are highly related to education and are reflected in factual information about foreign affairs and knowledge of the nature of, and rationale for, official policies.

Dependent variable: The degree of conformity of one's foreign policy opinions to official government policy.

Central hypothesis: The greater the attachment to the mainstream, the greater the degree of conformity of one's foreign policy opinions to official policy.

Note that both of the above explanations of the effect of knowledge are *consensus* theories, i.e. they predict that increasing knowledge will move all groups toward the same point. Either because they gain better understanding (the enlightenment model) or because they are more subject to social influence (the mainstream model), people are similarly affected by increased knowledge. In these theories, there is a single pole toward which knowledge impels people regardless of their starting point.

The above issue is vital, because we intend to present some data that appear to support the mainstream argument. However, on closer analysis they reveal a contradictory result—a polarization of opinion with increased knowledge. The data are drawn from a probability sample of 558 residents of the Detroit Metropolitan Area and are part of the Detroit Area Study data for 1963-64.⁶ The questionnaire included a sixteen-item measure of knowledge of foreign relations. The questions were straightforward and factual but required considerable knowledge. Respondents were asked to state which among the following countries are located in Africa: Ecuador, Ghana, Afghanistan, Mongolia, and Morocco; which among West Germany, Algeria, France, Japan, England, and Russia have developed and tested their own atomic weapons; and which among Egypt, Po-

⁶ We are indebted to John C. Scott, Director of the Detroit Area Study, and Robert Hefner and Sheldon Levy, principal investigators for the 1963-1964 study, for allowing us to include several of our items in the questionnaire and making the data freely available to us.

MODIGLIANI

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MODEL

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land, Spain, Mainland China, and India have Communist governments. They were scored for number right minus number wrong on the sixteen items and are here divided into high, medium, and low knowledge groups.

Respondents were also asked a number of items on particular policies toward the United Nations, trade with Communist countries, disarmament, and so forth. We have singled out for consideration here those with particular relevance for the mainstream theory. They are items in which respondents are asked to choose one among three alternative policies, one of which had official government sanction at the time the survey was conducted.

According to the mainstream argument, we should expect that, with increasing knowledge, individuals will tend to reject both of the alternatives that are not officially endorsed and accept the one that is. With this in mind, we can examine the data in Table 1. On all three policy items, there is a pronounced increase in the percentage picking the official "mainstream," or middle, alternative as knowledge increases. This is at the expense of *both* more liberal and more conservative alternatives on China and on trade. However, on the question of military strength there seems to be some shift from right to left, as one might expect from the enlightenment theory.

The most striking feature of Table 1, though, is still the dramatic and consistent increase in support for government policy with increased knowledge. One might argue that, where there has been no policy shift, as in our policy toward China, increased knowledge will bring equal defections from both poles; where policy has recently shifted (as it did with trade with the Soviet Union and to some degree with the arms race), increased knowledge will exert its *dominant* pull on those who advocate the old official policy. By this reasoning, those low in knowledge are, because of their diminished contact with mainstream influences, more likely to lag behind in policy shifts. In this instance, the shift represents a liberalization. This would suggest that, where administration policy shifts to the right, the move to the official alternative that accompanies increased knowledge will be greatest among those who favor the more liberal rather than the more conservative alternative. While we cannot test this hypothesis here, Table 1 does seem to offer some encouragement.

THE COGNITIVE CONSISTENCY MODEL

However, we must consider still another theory relating knowledge of foreign affairs to policy opinions, the cognitive consistency model. This final model contrasts with earlier consensus models in its implication that increasing knowledge will change people in *different* direc-

Policy

China:^a

- The United States should withdraw support of the UN if other Communist China
- The United States should encourage Communist China into the UN and continue to support the UN
- The United States should encourage Communist China to admit Communist China
- The United States should encourage Communist China into the UN

(N)

$$\chi^2 = 13.9, p < .05$$

Trade:^b

- The United States should not trade with Russia
- The United States should encourage trade with Russia
- The United States should encourage trade with Russia
- The United States should encourage trade with Russia

(N)

$$\chi^2 = 19.9, p < .05$$

Military strength:^c

- Should be built up
- About right
- Should be cut back

(N)

$$\chi^2 = 22.8, p < .05$$

^a The question read: "Which policy toward admitting Red China is best?"

^b The question read: "Some of the news recently. Which of the following is the best?"

^c The question read: "There is a question about the U.S. present military strength of the U.S. Should it be built up, about right, or should it be cut back?"

tions leading to a greater knowledgeable. This model policy position stems from that are being applied to

TABLE 1

RELATION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS KNOWLEDGE TO SELECTED POLICIES
(in per cent)

Policy	Knowledge		
	Low	Medium	High
China: ^a			
The United States should withdraw some of its support of the UN if other nations admit Communist China	24	16	12
The United States should oppose letting Communist China into the UN but should continue to support the UN if other nations admit Communist China	46	60	66
The United States should not oppose letting Communist China into the UN	30	24	22
	100	100	100
(N)	(152)	(202)	(159)
$\chi^2 = 13.9, p < .05$			
Trade: ^b			
The United States should not sell anything to Russia	29	16	14
The United States should only sell surplus food to Russia	33	45	50
The United States should be willing to sell anything except military weapons to Russia	38	39	35
	100	100	100
(N)	(159)	(203)	(161)
$\chi^2 = 19.9, p < .05$			
Military strength: ^c			
Should be built up	40	28	17
About right	55	65	70
Should be cut back	5	7	13
	100	100	100
(N)	(153)	(198)	(151)
$\chi^2 = 22.8, p < .05$			

^a The question read: "Which do you think would be the best United States policy toward admitting Red China to the UN?"

^b The question read: "Some discussion concerning trade with Russia has been in the news recently. Which of these positions is closest to what you think about the matter?"

^c The question read: "There are a number of different opinions about how much military strength the U.S. should have. How do you feel? Do you think that the present military strength of the U.S. should be cut back, built up, or is it about right?"

tions leading to a greater polarization of opinion among the more knowledgeable. This model argues that endorsement of a specific policy position stems from more general attitudes and assumptions that are being applied to a specific case. Knowledge of foreign affairs is

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CONSISTENCY MODEL

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important not because it reflects enlightenment or exposure to mainstream influences but because it reflects conceptual sophistication. Such sophistication reflects the ability to integrate specific policies with more general attitudes and assumptions one holds.

Clearly, the cognitive consistency model implies a polarization of opinion among the more knowledgeable. Poorly informed individuals, even with different ideological orientations, will have difficulty relating their orientation to specific policies. The result is a good deal of randomness and inconsistency in the choices of such individuals and no clear differentiation among those members with different predispositions. However, among the sophisticated, those with different predispositions will rally around different specific policies, creating sharper differentiation among those with different ideological orientations. This model is summarized in Chart 2.

CHART 2

SUMMARY OF THE COGNITIVE CONSISTENCY MODEL

Independent variable: One's general political orientation, ideology, and beliefs. For example, assumptions about the nature of the Soviet Union and the nature of the Cold War.

Intervening variable: One's conceptual sophistication and the ability to integrate general attitudes and assumptions with specific policy opinions. Such sophistication is likely to be a product of education and will be reflected in knowledge of foreign affairs.

Dependent variable: The degree of relationship between one's specific foreign policy opinions and one's general attitudes and assumptions.

Central hypothesis: The greater the conceptual sophistication, the greater the relationship between general assumptions and specific policy opinions.

To explore the cognitive consistency model, we need some measure of general attitudes and assumptions; since we are considering policies relevant to the Cold War, attitudes and assumptions about the Soviet Union seem appropriate. In a separate study, the authors have been attempting to evaluate three coherent sets of assumptions or "belief systems" about the Soviet Union by examining, through an analysis of historical data, the predictions they imply about Soviet-Western interaction. The assumptions these belief systems make about long-range Soviet goals, Soviet risk-taking behavior, and the Soviet view of the West have been outlined elsewhere.⁷ Using this earlier formulation as a guideline, we wrote three items to assess each respondent's assumptions about these aspects of the Soviet Union.

⁷ See William A. Gamson, "Evaluating Beliefs about International Conflict," in Roger Fisher, ed., *International Conflict and Behavioral Science*, New York, Basic Books, 1964, pp. 27-40; William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani, "Tensions and Concessions: The Empirical Confirmation of Beliefs about Soviet Behavior," *Social Problems*, Vol. 11, 1963, pp. 34-48; and William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani, "The Carrot and/or the Stick: Soviet Responses to Western Foreign Policy, 1946-1953," Center for Research on Conflict Resolution, Carnegie Project No. 4, Working Document 10, paper presented at meetings of International Peace Research Society, Chicago, November 1964, mimeographed.

Each respondent which we shall refer to states that the Soviet domination and is views Western resistance achieve its goals through states that the Soviet expansion of influence the achievement of limited encroachment Soviet Union—much that the Soviet Union what it has and is the West is viewed as a control in the world.

Each respondent among the following

- I. On Soviet goals:
 - a. When all is government is to what their aim
 - b. Russia is trying isn't really trying
 - c. Russia is more of living than (Position C)

- II. On Soviet risk-taking:
 - a. Russia is cautious could lead to a
 - b. Russia is even what it wants.
 - c. Russia is willing but it will try

- III. On Soviet view of Russians believe what they believe:
 - a. Russia almost of us and get a
 - b. Russia almost advantage of
 - c. Russia seems to that we try to

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CONSISTENCY MODEL

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Each respondent was classified into one of three belief systems, which we shall refer to as Positions A, B, and C. Briefly, Position A states that the Soviet Union is actively pursuing the goal of world domination and is willing to incur high risks to achieve this goal. It views Western resistance as so sporadic that the Soviet Union can achieve its goals through continual pressure short of war. Position B states that the Soviet Union is actively interested in achieving a *limited* expansion of influence and is willing to incur only moderate risks in the achievement of its goals. It views the West as both susceptible to limited encroachments and as attempting such encroachments on the Soviet Union—much like an opponent in a game. Position C states that the Soviet Union is actively interested only in holding on to what it has and is unwilling to incur risks except in self-defense. The West is viewed as actively seeking to undermine Soviet influence and control in the world.

Each respondent was asked to make a first and a second choice among the following sets of statements:

- I. *On Soviet goals:* Many people are concerned about what the Russian government is really trying to do. Which of these do you think is closest to what their aims really are?
 - a. When all is said and done, Russia is determined to conquer the United States. (Position A)
 - b. Russia is trying to get the most it can from the United States but it isn't really trying to conquer us. (Position B)
 - c. Russia is more interested in increasing its own security and standard of living than it is in getting the most it can from the United States. (Position C)
- II. *On Soviet risk-taking behavior:* How willing do you think the Russians are to take chances to get what they want?
 - a. Russia is cautious and will try to avoid starting any trouble which could lead to a serious crisis. (Position C)
 - b. Russia is even willing to risk starting a serious crisis in order to get what it wants. (Position A)
 - c. Russia is willing to stir up quite a bit of trouble to get what it wants, but it will try to avoid causing any really serious crisis. (Position B)
- III. *On Soviet view of the West:* Which of these best describes what the Russians believe about the United States—even if they are wrong in what they believe:
 - a. Russia almost always seems to believe that they can take advantage of us and get away with it. (Position A)
 - b. Russia almost always seems to be afraid that we are trying to take advantage of them. (Position C)
 - c. Russia seems to believe both that they can take advantage of us and that we try to take advantage of them. (Position B)

We neither expected nor found a consistency across items that matched our ideal or a priori statement of the three belief systems. However, there was sufficient relationship among answers to the three items to identify each respondent with the belief system he most nearly approximated.

It is a central premise of the cognitive consistency model that specific policy opinions flow from more general attitudes and assumptions. If this is correct, then we should expect some relation between assumptions about the Soviet Union and the sort of policy items included in Table 1. Table 2 indicates that the expected relationship exists.

TABLE 2
BELIEF SYSTEMS BY SELECTED POLICIES
(in per cent)

Policy	Belief System		
	A	B	C
China: ^a			
Withdraw from the UN if China enters	24	16	16
Oppose entry but don't withdraw from the UN	56	62	48
Do not oppose Chinese entry to the UN	20	22	36
	100	100	100
(N)	(114)	(293)	(107)
$\chi^2 = 13.1, p < .05, C = .19$			
Trade: ^a			
Trade nothing with Russia	32	17	11
Trade surplus food only	39	47	36
Trade anything but weapons	29	36	54
	100	100	100
(N)	(117)	(297)	(109)
$\chi^2 = 20.5, p < .05, C = .24$			
Military strength: ^a			
Should be built up more	38	29	17
About right	57	64	70
Should be cut back	5	7	13
	100	100	100
(N)	(111)	(287)	(105)
$\chi^2 = 14.5, p < .05, C = .21$			

^a See Table 1 for the exact wording of the items and alternative answers.

On policy toward China, Position A people are the most likely of the three groups to be for withdrawing from the UN; Position B people to oppose Chinese entry but not withdraw; and Position C people not to oppose Chinese entry into the UN. The other two items show a similar pattern. However, the degree of relationship is quite

small. Using as a mean rected so that it has a only .19, .24, and .21

The slimness of the policy opinion is easily model. Such a relation among respondents has Those low in knowledge tions to the specific ling for knowledge of dicted pattern emerge policy for those high as against coefficients Clearly, belief systems for the knowledgeable.

BELIEF SYSTEMS BY

Policy	A
China: ^a	
Withdraw	25
Oppose	45
Do not oppose	30
	100
(N)	(44)
Trade: ^a	
Nothing	34
Surplus food	33
Anything	33
	100
(N)	(46)
Military strength: ^a	
Build up	48
About right	48
Cut back	4
	100
(N)	(46)

^a See Table 1 for the ex

small. Using as a measure of degree the contingency coefficient, corrected so that it has an upper limit of 1, the three items show C's of only .19, .24, and .21 respectively.

The slimness of the relation between belief system and specific policy opinion is easily accounted for by the cognitive consistency model. Such a relationship, it suggests, will be pronounced only among respondents high in conceptual sophistication and knowledge. Those low in knowledge will be unable to relate their general assumptions to the specific situation in a consistent manner. By controlling for knowledge of foreign affairs in Table 3, we see that the predicted pattern emerges. The relationship between belief system and policy for those high in knowledge has coefficients of .46, .51, and .31 as against coefficients of .14, .19, and .14 for those low in knowledge. Clearly, belief systems are connected with policy opinions primarily for the knowledgeable.

TABLE 3

BELIEF SYSTEMS BY SELECTED POLICIES, CONTROLLING FOR KNOWLEDGE
(in per cent)

Policy	Knowledge/Belief System								
	Low			Medium			High		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
China: ^a									
Withdraw	25	22	32	16	17	15	28	8	3
Oppose	45	50	35	58	63	51	67	71	54
Do not oppose	30	28	32	26	20	33	5	21	43
(N)	100 (44)	100 (78)	100 (31)	100 (31)	100 (132)	100 (39)	100 (39)	100 (83)	100 (37)
	C = .14			C = .15			C = .46		
Trade: ^a									
Nothing	34	29	18	28	14	13	31	12	3
Surplus food	33	34	30	34	46	46	51	60	30
Anything	33	37	52	38	39	41	18	28	67
(N)	100 (46)	100 (80)	100 (33)	100 (32)	100 (132)	100 (39)	100 (39)	100 (85)	100 (37)
	C = .19			C = .18			C = .51		
Military strength: ^a									
Build up	48	38	36	36	31	10	27	16	8
About right	48	57	61	61	61	80	65	75	66
Cut back	4	5	3	4	8	10	8	9	26
(N)	100 (46)	100 (77)	100 (31)	100 (28)	100 (131)	100 (39)	100 (37)	100 (79)	100 (35)
	C = .14			C = .24			C = .31		

^a See Table 1 for the exact wording of the items and alternative answers.

MODIGLIANI

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consistency model that general attitudes and assumptions some relation between the sort of policy items in the expected relationship

POLICIES

Belief System		
A	B	C
24	16	16
56	62	48
20	22	36
100 (114)	100 (293)	100 (107)
32	17	11
39	47	36
29	36	54
100 (117)	100 (297)	100 (109)
38	29	17
57	64	70
5	7	13
100 (111)	100 (287)	100 (105)

and alternative answers.

people are the most likely from the UN; Position B withdraw; and Position C the UN. The other two items agree of relationship is quite

One of the striking implications of the cognitive consistency model is that increases in knowledge should have a polarizing effect on the opinions of a set of persons. Knowledge has the effect of allowing one to understand more clearly the policy most consistent with his predispositions. This means that subsets of persons who share different belief systems will tend to deviate from one another with increases in knowledge, each moving toward the policy most consistent with its underlying assumptions. Thus, Position A advocates, with more knowledge, will be more sharply in favor of withdrawing from the UN, trading nothing with Russia, and building up arms. Position C people will move in exactly the opposite direction, becoming *less* favorable on all these alternatives, while Position B people will show larger percentages for the official government policy on all these items.

Note how such an interpretation is possible in the results of Table 1. If Position A and Position C people are moving⁸ in opposite and offsetting directions and Position B people are moving toward the center from the more extreme alternatives, then the over-all effect will be an increase in the support for the official policy. Combining advocates of all three positions may conceal the fact that knowledge has a different relationship for those with different images of the Soviet Union.

Table 4 (which is simply a rearrangement of Table 3, controlling for belief systems) shows the polarizing effect we have been discussing.⁹ While the pattern is least clear with Position A people, by and large increases in knowledge tend to increase agreement with the policy that Table 2 showed to be associated with the belief system in question. Thus, Position A people are less likely to favor admitting China to the United Nations as knowledge increases, while Position C people are more likely to favor this alternative as knowledge increases. Similarly, on the question of trade with Russia, increasing knowledge moves Position A people away from freer trade, Position C people toward more liberal trade, and Position B people away from the extremes of trading nothing or anything.

⁸ We ask the reader's indulgence in the use of such process language to describe differences among individuals with different knowledge. Our data, of course, show nothing about process, but since the models we are contrasting are talking about the effects of knowledge on opinion formation, it is stultifying to make use of elaborate circumlocutions whenever we discuss interpretations of this data. We hope that this general reminder will be sufficient to allow us the convenience of such language in interpreting static results.

⁹ Our belief systems show only the slightest relationship to our measure of knowledge of foreign relations. Advocates of Position C are equally represented in all three knowledge groups; however, Position A people are slightly overrepresented at the expense of Position B people in the highest and in the lowest knowledge groups. The over-all relationship, however, is so slight and irregular that we will treat the two measures as independent.

But — are positions not correlated with knowledge? (Maybe "knowledge" favors A — or the official position.)

KNOWLEDGE BY SELF

Policy	Low	High
China: ^a		
Withdraw	25	
Oppose	45	
Do not oppose	30	
	100	
(N)	(44)	C
Trade: ^a		
Nothing	34	
Surplus food	33	
Anything	33	
	100	
(N)	(46)	C
Military strength: ^a		
Build up	48	
About right	48	
Cut back	4	
	100	
(N)	(46)	C

^a See Table 1 for the exact percentages.

The over-all pattern of the data suggests that the combination of the two variables, knowledge and belief system, which tend to correlate, has a polarizing effect on support for official government policy. We would suggest that this polarization around the official position is due to the combination of knowledge and belief system, and is not due to the polarization of society and susceptibility to social influence.

If we can interpret these forces, then some

KNOWLEDGE AND FOREIGN POLICY OPINIONS

197

TABLE 4

KNOWLEDGE BY SELECTED POLICIES, CONTROLLING FOR BELIEF SYSTEMS
(in per cent)

Policy	Belief System/Knowledge								
	A			B			C		
	Low	Med.	High	Low	Med.	High	Low	Med.	High
China: ^a									
Withdraw	25	16	28	22	17	8	32	15	3
Oppose	45	58	67	50	63	71	35	51	54
Do not oppose	30	26	5	28	20	21	32	33	43
(N)	100 (44)	100 (31)	100 (39)	100 (78)	100 (132)	100 (83)	100 (31)	100 (39)	100 (37)
	C = .34			C = .22			C = .38		
Trade: ^a									
Nothing	34	28	31	29	14	12	18	13	3
Surplus food	33	34	51	34	46	60	30	46	30
Anything	33	38	18	37	39	28	52	41	67
(N)	100 (46)	100 (32)	100 (39)	100 (80)	100 (132)	100 (85)	100 (33)	100 (39)	100 (37)
	C = .25			C = .28			C = .33		
Military strength: ^a									
Build up	48	36	27	38	31	16	36	10	9
About right	48	61	65	57	61	75	61	80	66
Cut back	4	4	8	5	8	9	3	10	26
(N)	100 (46)	100 (28)	100 (37)	100 (77)	100 (131)	100 (79)	100 (31)	100 (39)	100 (35)
	C = .24			C = .22			C = .45		

^a See Table 1 for the exact wording of the items and alternative answers.

CONCLUSION

The over-all pattern of results in Table 4 is not without its aberrations. We are inclined to feel that they are best illuminated by a combination of the mainstream and cognitive consistency models. We would suggest that two primary forces are operating, both of which tend to correlate with education and knowledge. On the one hand, *there is a strain toward attitudinal consistency that increases with knowledge*; this produces a higher relationship between belief system and policy among the more knowledgeable and an increasing polarization around different policy alternatives for those who start with different premises. At the same time, *there is greater attachment to society and susceptibility to social influences*—a force that produces support for official government policies.

If we can interpret our measure of knowledge as reflecting both these forces, then some of the aberrations in Table 4 make sense. Let us

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cognitive consistency model a polarizing effect on the effect of allowing one consistent with his predispositions who share different another with increases in most consistent with its A advocates, with more of withdrawing from the building up arms. Position C the direction, becoming less Position B people will show ent policy on all these items. ble in the results of Table re moving⁸ in opposite and ole are moving toward the then the over-all effect will ial policy. Combining advo- the fact that knowledge has different images of the Soviet

ment of Table 3, controlling ect we have been discussing.⁹ ition A people, by and large reement with the policy that he belief system in question. to favor admitting China to ases, while Position C people tive as knowledge increases. Russia, increasing knowledge eer trade, Position C people on B people away from the

of such process language to describe knowledge. Our data, of course, show are contrasting are talking about the is stultifying to make use of elab- orations of this data. We hope that us the convenience of such language

relationship to our measure of knowl- C are equally represented in all three e are slightly overrepresented at the in the lowest knowledge groups. The irregular that we will treat the two

toward UN admittance of the strain toward conservative right,¹⁰ or "withdrawal knowledge, while the strain toward the middle, or "opposite with increasing knowledge advocates away from the left, only one force pushing them in, in fact, show that defection pronounced than increased Table 4, China question, under "neutral" position increases only 10 per cent of the "do not oppose"

we have two forces pushing position and only one pushing. Again the data show that defection from the right position to left position (see Table 4, endorsement of the "do not oppose" 43 per cent, while endorsement from 32 to 3 per cent).

to push them out of the middle, and the data show increasing knowledge (see Table B: endorsement of the "do not oppose" 21 per cent, and endorsement decreases from 22 to 8 per

that in cases where government direction of such a shift is likely, a shift to the left in current on trade with the world-up) may act as added deterrent to rightward shifts.

"extreme left" does not represent any such alternatives in the political world agreement with the proposition "Communist China into the UN," is sometimes used; this opinion is "extreme left" only to refer to it. In fact, we attempted to word it so that it would appear extreme in the absolute sense in our respondents' choices.

And, indeed, on these two policy questions the data show that increased knowledge brings a much greater increase for the left alternative among Position C advocates than increase for the right alternative among Position A advocates.

We cannot disentangle the contribution of these hypothesized forces in our own results. But with a careful selection of policy questions and with independent measures of conceptual sophistication and conformity to official doctrine, it should be possible to parcel out the effects of each.